

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE



LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

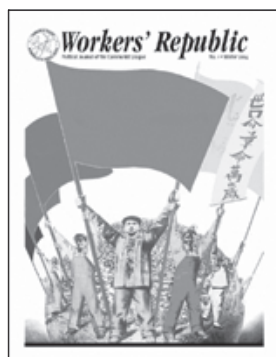
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1 Communism, as a social system, is a society without classes, without a coercive state and without social inequality. Communism is the society of general freedom, where all power rests in the hands of an educated, organized and self-acting people. It is a social system in which all aspects of society — politics, economics, culture and social relations — are organized and developed for the benefit of all humanity, and not for the profit of a few.

Communism, as a political philosophy, is the principled framework that outlines the conditions within which the proletariat develops its program of liberation. In its theory, communism explains the developments of classes and class society, and how these developments affect the organic antagonisms between different classes. In its action, communism seeks to organize the highest possible unity of proletarian forces in order to achieve its aims. Communism — as established in its principles — is a guide to action. It is the theoretical lamp that lights the way forward, not a roadmap or blueprint.

2 Capitalism is, in essence, the production of commodities for profit. Capitalism requires a constant revolutionizing of technology and the instruments of production in order to maintain or increase its profits. The concrete result has been the creation of an integrated and interdependent global capitalist system, where nation-states serve as centers of power for this or that capitalist combination. Capitalist

competition, the drive for greater profits, not only forces the revolutionizing of production, it also forces capitalism to produce more commodities than society needs. The epidemic of overproduction is the natural consequence of a system where the production of commodities for profit is the driving force.

Modern capitalism has taken all of this to its highest and final level — imperialism. Individual capital and individual capitalists have combined into monopolies. The capital of industry has merged with banking and finance capital, and has used its combined strength to reach around the world. Through the export of capital, the most powerful capitalist nation-states have divided the world — its resources, its capital and its people — among themselves. But the world is finite, and competition among these imperialist Great Powers for the spoils of the earth is the natural consequence.

3 As much as the production of commodities for profit defines the essence of capitalism as an economic system, so private property defines the essence of the economic power of the capitalist class. Private property is not, as some bourgeois propagandists would have you believe, the same as personal property. Private property — or, more correctly, bourgeois private property (also known as capital) — is a social construction, used by the capitalists as a means of justifying their tyranny in the economy.

The abolition of private property in favor of social or common property means the returning of the product of labor to the laborer. Since capital is a social product, produced by teams of proletarians, it can only be held in social ownership. Breaking private property into smaller chunks can only work if that capital is based on pre-capitalist foundations, like large farms. Modern, large-scale capitalist production cannot be broken into smaller elements without destroying the means of production themselves.

4 Capitalist class society developed three main classes: the proletariat, bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie. The proletariat is the class in society that subsists solely from the sale of its labor power and draws no profit from the production of commodities or any other kind

without exploitation and oppression makes their organization so much a house of cards. Our enemy is armed to the teeth, but our ability to act in our own class interests is the most powerful weapon of all. Like our namesakes of history, and with a conviction forged in the fires of today's struggles, we once again raise the battle cry: ***The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of the world, unite!***

socialism, as a trend of petty-bourgeois socialist thought, has been able to provide a relatively coherent program of action for these dispirited and disoriented petty bourgeois. Under conditions of sharp and open class struggle, the ugliest and most backward elements of the national socialist petty bourgeois can emerge, leading these forces on to the path toward fascism, traveled in the past by the likes of Mussolini, Pilsudski and Hitler.

27 Communism has its ideological enemies; it also has its allies and friends. An ally of communist proletarians can be found among the movement of proletarian socialism. Generally speaking, proletarian socialists are either sections of the proletariat who are not yet sufficiently clear about the conditions of the liberation of their class (or are not yet willing to draw the necessary conclusions from their experiences), or they are individual petty bourgeois seeking a deeper alternative.

In general, communists and proletarian socialists can find much common ground for united action, up to and including within the common organizational framework of a principled workers' political party. Thus, for communists to carry out work among and alongside proletarian socialists, it may be necessary to become a member of one or more of these bourgeois and petty-bourgeois socialist organizations, with the goal of winning as many of these proletarians to the project of building a principled, revolutionary political party of the proletariat, composed of communists and proletarian socialists.

28 Today, the proletariat possibly faces its darkest hour. The dichotomy posed to the proletarians of the world at the outbreak of the First World War — “socialism or barbarism” — is no longer adequate. The choice facing the world proletariat today is: **socialism** (the self-liberation of the proletariat) or **death** (through fascist barbarism and/or nuclear war). There is no middle course. The proletariat must take its future into its own hands, or else risk an unending future of slavery and humiliation.

Our enemy is strong, but our unity gives us limitless strength. Our enemy is well organized, but our solidarity and commitment to a future

of capital. At once, these conditions place the proletariat in a special place: on the one hand, the proletariat under capitalism finds itself at the mercy of those who own the means of production and are dependent on the demand for their labor; on the other hand, the proletariat as a class is an indispensable part of production and cannot be discarded like so much obsolete machinery. Thus, the proletariat is the key to transforming society, due to their central place in production. They are the only genuinely revolutionary class.

The bourgeoisie is the class in society that subsists on the surplus value created by the proletariat in the process of production. The bourgeoisie, the capitalist class, maintains its economic position by virtue of its private ownership of the means of production, which allows it to exploit the proletariat through work for wages while reaping the profit on the commodities created by labor. The bourgeoisie's need to create ever-larger profits results in an increasing concentration of power in the hands of the proletariat; they are compelled to bring together in greater masses, which gives the proletariat the ability to feel their strength when acting in unison.

Between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie stands a third class: the petty bourgeoisie. As capitalism has advanced, the petty bourgeoisie has been transformed to serve a more proper role. As many broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie were forced to join the ranks of the proletariat, their places were taken by “new” elements created by the bourgeoisie to better serve modern capitalist production. The petty bourgeoisie as a class found itself being simultaneously ruined and reborn as a managerial appendage serving the bourgeoisie, thus becoming a stable force in the service of capitalism.

5 In order for the proletariat to establish its own workers' republic, which is the first step on the road to the abolition of classes, it must raise itself to the level of a ruling class. The first great conflict in which the proletariat must engage in order to achieve the establishment of a workers' republic is the battle for democracy. This is because it is on the political plane that all classes are bound together and placed in a common arena. Direct economic struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie often are confined to one workplace, one region or one

industry. Thus, they are prone to isolation and marginalization.

On the other hand, the political struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie take on a generalized, societal character. A political victory by the proletariat in one region or country generally has an effect on the position of the proletarians in other areas. Communists seek the broadest possible union of the proletariat on a political level for the purposes of uniting the localized and isolated struggles of the working class — including economic struggles — into a common battle for revolutionary democracy, designed to aid the proletariat and its task of elevating itself to a ruling class. This is why every class struggle is, in the final analysis, a political struggle.

6 Because the class struggle is a political struggle, the proletariat must be organized as a distinct and independent political body. Concretely, this means that proletarians need to unite into a single political organization that is able to challenge the bourgeoisie on its own field and win — a political party of the working class. Communists do not form a proletarian political party that stands in opposition to other genuine parties of the working class.

Communists do not have any interests or principles that politically separate it from the proletariat as a whole. The principles of communism distinguish their adherents from other proletarians in only two ways: first, in all struggles of the proletariat, communists point out and bring to the front the interests of the entire class, regardless of this or that difference; and, second, in the various stages of the class struggle, communists always represent the interests of the movement as a whole, not just the views of this or that leadership. Thus, the communists are on the one hand the most advanced and resolute component of the proletariat of every country, and on the other hand are the most theoretically developed and are able to articulate and understand the various developments, conditions and results of the class struggle.

7 The liberation of the proletariat from capitalism is the responsibility and task of the proletariat itself. Historical experience has shown that all other classes cannot accomplish the outstanding political, economic and social tasks of capitalist society without

and terminology — “the people” and “the masses” are their generally popular terms — in order to obscure the identity of which class is really in power: the petty bourgeoisie.

However, as varied and distinct as many of these organizations are from each other, they can, in the main, be placed in one of two main subcategories: bureaucratic socialism and democratic socialism. Bureaucratic socialism means the rule of a petty-bourgeois bureaucracy in place of and over the proletariat. The bureaucratic socialist sees the proletariat as “too oppressed,” “too uncultured” and “too uneducated” to serve effectively as revolutionary leaders. Thus, the bureaucratic socialist believes some kind of bureaucratic caste must substitute itself for direct proletarian rule. Seemingly on the opposite pole is democratic socialism. The main programmatic characteristic of democratic socialism is its fetishism of bourgeois democratic forms, and conscious limitation of its action to the boundaries established by bourgeois democracy. However, like its fellow trends of petty-bourgeois socialism, democratic socialism also presupposes the existence of an elite caste of professionals and petty-bourgeois “specialists” that will “assist” the proletariat.

26 Another trend of petty-bourgeois socialism necessarily deserving of special attention is national socialism. National socialism refers to that trend of petty-bourgeois socialism that rejects out of hand the importance of the international character of the proletariat, its revolution and the transition to communism. Modern national socialism is an offshoot from bureaucratic socialism. National socialism, as a broader concept, lies at the heart of all trends of petty-bourgeois socialism — including those trends that quite loudly attempt to repudiate and distance themselves from nationalist ideology. Over time, however, especially as the class struggle acquires a sharper character where they operate, the national socialist petty bourgeois begins to apply this nationalist method to his or her own conditions.

A more recent trend of national socialism is found among organizations and individuals involved in the “anti-globalization” movement. Primarily nationalistic in outlook and scale, the petty bourgeoisie has the most to lose from the advances in capitalist production that have spurred on the move toward globalization. National

degeneration of revolutionary development.

24 By far, the proletariat's greatest ideological enemy within its own ranks comes from those who support the theories and programs of bourgeois socialism. Bourgeois socialism, as its name implies, is defined as those who seek to use generally socialistic policies and methods as a means of easing social ills, while at the same time preserving the basic social, economic and political relations generated by bourgeois society. The bourgeois socialists want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting from them. Bourgeois socialism requires that the proletariat should remain within the bounds of existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas concerning the bourgeoisie.

Most of today's "official" organizations of the proletariat — whether they call themselves "Social Democratic," "Socialist," "Labor" or "Communist" — are representatives of bourgeois socialism. All their talk of "socialism" or "communism" is limited to idealistic appeals designed to bolster (or discipline) their own membership, while their practical activity is aimed at preserving the same institutions that lead sections of the proletariat to rise up and revolt. In periods of revolutionary or radical upheaval, these "socialists" can play a special role on behalf of the bourgeoisie. Throughout the 20th century, the bourgeoisie has turned toward the various forms of bourgeois socialism to save itself from destruction (revolution). Regardless of its form, the ultimate outcome was the same: capitalist class relations were preserved, and the proletariat and its organizations of struggle were destroyed.

25 Even though bourgeois socialism represents the greatest ideological threat, it is neither the most pernicious nor the most confusing. While bourgeois socialism represents the interests of the bourgeoisie and its preservation using "socialist" means, petty-bourgeois socialism represents the interests of those middle layers of professionals, independent producers, intellectuals divorced from class relations, middlemen and profiteers, etc. Unlike bourgeois socialism, which is relatively honest and straightforward regarding which class will rule, petty-bourgeois socialism often hides behind various labels

endangering their class position and privileges in the process. While communists certainly welcome democratic and social justice movements among other classes, and will aid any such genuine movements with all our might, we do not see them as a substitute for an independent proletarian movement fighting for its own interests.

Inevitably, in the course of the class struggle, individuals from the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will present themselves to the proletariat and offer to assist. When such people from other classes join the proletarian movement, the first demand upon them must be that they do not bring with them any remnants of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois prejudices, privileges and ways of functioning, and that they irreversibly assimilate into the proletariat. Sometimes, in spite of their best efforts, these people cannot assimilate themselves into the proletariat and cannot break from their prejudices and privileges. In a political party of the working class, they are a falsifying element. If there are grounds that necessitate tolerating them, it is a duty only to tolerate them, to allow them no influence or place in party leadership, and to keep in mind that a break with them is only a matter of time.

8 The structure of the proletarian party, the political party of the working class, will inevitably vary from country to country, from region to region. While the specific structures and forms of a proletarian party must as a rule be flexible and responsive to the demands of the situation, communists believe that such structures must be based on clearly defined principles that best serve to further the work of the party and the cause of the proletariat itself. Democracy, specifically the freedom to criticize, is essential to the development of the proletarian party. Without democracy, the party inevitably degenerates into a narrow, confessional sect, where its members are little more than automatons carrying out the wishes of a leadership elite.

Once a full democratic discussion has taken place and a vote has been taken, it is time for the party to act. Unity, specifically the power of a united party in action, is the necessary compliment to democratic discussion. Unity in action allows for the party membership as a whole to test the validity of the decisions it has made. This works to the

advantage of both sides in a dispute. It allows both the majority and the minority in any dispute to be proven correct, without any equivocation that can be raised due to partial or inadequate participation. Minorities seek to become majorities, and have the unalienable right to do so. Unity in action allows those minorities the opportunity to say, based on the experience of actually carrying out the above stated decision, that they were correct or incorrect.

9 Any struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie inevitably involves the state. The state is the crux of the capitalist system and bourgeois rule. The overthrow of capitalist rule cannot take place without the overthrow of the capitalist state. The state is not some amalgam of governmental agencies and deliberative bodies. Those are more or less mere forms of administration. The central element of the state is the organized and developed body of armed men and women that enforces the decisions of the bourgeoisie. Above all else, the central task of these armed bodies is the defense and preservation of private property. Thus, the modern capitalist state is a specialized instrument for the maintenance of bourgeois rule.

Although the capitalist state attempts to stand over and rule all classes, it remains an overarching instrument of the bourgeoisie. Even during those times when the bourgeoisie is forced to share space with representatives of the petty bourgeoisie and proletariat in the agencies and deliberative formations of government, the fundamental elements of the state remain solidly under their control. Communists do not seek to simply grab hold of the capitalist state and wield it for its own purposes. The fundamental character, the role and control, of the state does not change with the granting of broader political rights.

10 The workers' republic — referred to historically as the dictatorship of the proletariat — is not merely another form of the state, or of class rule. Rather, it represents the transition between defeated bourgeois rule and the classless, communist society. The state is the linchpin of class society. Its abolition is key to the abolition of class distinctions and antagonisms. But the abolition of the state cannot be accomplished merely with the stroke of a pen. The

22 Always and at all times, communists wage a relentless struggle against the influence of bourgeois ideology in its ranks and in those of the proletariat as a whole. Bourgeois ideology, like all doctrines of ruling classes, are meant as a means of passive social control over exploited and oppressed groups. In modern capitalist class society, primary elements of bourgeois ideology include individualism, subjectivism, pragmatism, chauvinism and mysticism. These four main branches of bourgeois ideology encompass all other elements and serve as the pillars of the bourgeoisie's ideological control of society.

For communists, the fight against bourgeois ideology must begin with a systematic and broad-based attack on the ideology of pragmatism. More than any other ideology, pragmatism restrains the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes and class antagonisms. A decisive break by the proletariat with the bourgeois methods of pragmatism will mean that a great step forward in the struggle for the classless, communist society has been taken.

23 Communism is not the only political viewpoint that stands apart from bourgeois ideology, or regards itself as anti-capitalist. In fact, there are a wide variety of political currents, both within and outside of the proletariat, that stand in opposition to capitalist exploitation and oppression. Because human thought is a product of definite social conditions, as refracted through the distorting lens of class relations, so it is that the various differences within the socialist movement also reflect this distortion. All of the various and sundry trends of socialist thought can be placed into one of the class-based categories of socialism with little or no difficulty. The difficulty one might encounter in this process stems merely from the divergence of thought and action.

Class-based understanding of the development of socialist thought is essential to the development of the proletariat as a class capable of bringing about a classless society. By tracing the development of class ideology within the broader socialist movement, it becomes relatively easier to avoid mistakes and errors that, when considered initially, may seem formally correct, but ultimately lead to a retardation or even

to come into conflict with the imperialist Great Powers and had deposed its colonial viceroys or semicolonial compradors. Analogous to this, communists also ally themselves with states seeking to break the chains that bind them to the imperialist division of labor and hierarchy. In such instances, our support is conditional and meant to intersect those proletarians that seek to defend the political, economic and social gains they have made.

21 Because capitalism is a social system based on minority rule and the exploitation of the laboring majority, the bourgeoisie relies on the use of armed force to maintain its control. However, in times of severe political and economic crisis, the maintenance of bourgeois rule demands the use of extralegal forces that aim to smash the power of the proletarian organizations. Though it often defines itself in a myriad of names and titles, it is known universally by one term: fascism.

Put simply, fascism is a political movement of the petty bourgeoisie. It is the reaction of the petty bourgeoisie to both their ruin at the hands of capitalism (due to that system's collapse) and their impending entry into the ranks of the proletariat (generally as a result of a victorious proletarian revolution). There are many political forms taken by a fascist movement, contingent on the material conditions within which the latter emerges. Historically, when fascism gains state power, they immediately fuse with and accommodate the most conservative and backward elements of the capitalist state machinery. Fascism in power takes the form of a police state, domestically, and an imperialist empire, internationally.

Fascism represents at once the decay of capitalist class society and the latter's organic direction. That is, the totalitarian and barbaric methods of fascism are representative of the extent to which the bourgeoisie is willing or able to sacrifice all other classes for its survival. However, the bourgeoisie does not, and will never, reach a full consensus on the use of fascism, though it may seem as though such a consensus exists at times. Communists view fascism and the fascist movement as the shock troopers of bourgeois reaction and counterrevolution against proletarian action and the workers' republic.

capitalist state, due to its nature as a combination of armed agencies, must not only be dismantled, but its armed forces must be broken up and atomized.

In all, the workers' republic has four main tasks: 1) the ouster of the bourgeoisie from political power; 2) the eradication of the old organs of the bourgeois state; 3) the institution of democratic workers' control of production through the abolition of private property; and 4) the raising of the productive forces to a level where the material basis for class distinctions and class antagonism is forever eliminated. As the material basis for class distinctions and antagonisms disappears, those who were hitherto counted among the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will enter the ranks of labor. The proletariat comes to encompass all members of society, and the proletariat itself ceases to be a class. Thus, the state becomes an anachronism of society, to be discarded like an empty orange peel. With the disappearance of classes comes the disappearance of the state.

11 The opening phase of communism means the victory over class antagonisms. With the final abolition of private property and classes, the state will have been dismantled and disbanded. What remains will be a superstructure of administrative bodies, coordinating the production and distribution of goods on an international scale. During this first phase of communist society, this superstructure will exist as an arbiter of equality. This is because, under the first phase of communism, classes have been abolished, but different strata continue to exist.

The final transition to the highest phase of human society — the highest phase of communism — will be the victory over strata and bourgeois right. At that moment, the last vestiges of administrative superstructure will become redundant, and can be easily disbanded and replaced by the free association of laborers and producers. With the victory over bourgeois right and strata, it will finally be possible to inscribe as the singular law of society: From each according to their ability, to each according to their need.

12 The transition to the classless, communist society is not a singular event. Rather, the transition from capitalism to communism is a series of fundamental transformations — a series of “revolutions within revolutions” — that prepare the ground for future progressive development. These revolutions within revolutions affect all aspects of society, and are aimed at creating a new material reality more conducive for historical forward movement. Accompanying a revolution in politics, an economic revolution is needed to secure the abolition of private property, and the transformation of economic life from one based on production for profit to one based on production for common good. This necessitates placing the means of production in common ownership.

The transformation of social relations also requires a cultural revolution within the revolution. Culture reflects all the social contradictions embodied in the political and economic relations. Thus, if the political and economic relations of a given society are not sufficiently developed, a poverty of culture will necessarily exist. In Even if there has been a successful transformation in the political and economic arenas of society, there will still exist a poverty of culture because of the tentative and relatively chaotic nature of the new relations. This is the impetus for a cultural revolution within the broader social revolution.

13 The rise of the world market and a relatively integrated world capitalist system has ruled out in advance the idea that the transition from capitalism to communism can be completed on a local or national scale. Even if a proletarian revolution in a given country succeeded in eliminating all aspects of the indigenous bourgeoisie, that section of the proletariat is still confronted with the combined power of the bourgeoisie of all countries. Thus, resolving decisively the contradictions associated with the transition to communism requires the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and the abolition of private property, on a world scale.

Capitalism’s attempts at integrating the world capitalist market have resulted in the central contradiction of today’s society — the contradiction between the international character of the capitalist market

as a matter of principle the bourgeois conception of “illegal” or “foreign” proletarians.

At the same time, though, communists also recognize that the final unity of the proletariat is not a linear process. It may be necessary for certain sections of the proletariat to take a step away from their brothers and sisters, as a means of developing a more solid and established unification later. Such is often the case with proletarians from racially or nationally oppressed backgrounds. We recognize that it may be necessary for these proletarians to exercise their right to self-determination, up to and including independence, as a means of breaking the old dynamics of national chauvinism, and cultivating that instinctive internationalist impulse — which will eventually lead toward a reunion of both sections of the proletariat under a single banner.

20 A fundamental hallmark of class society is war. Under the rule of the bourgeoisie, wars of conquest and colonization have been waged by every generation, at the expense of untold millions of proletarians. In its drive for new markets and pools of resources, the bourgeoisie will not always be able to peacefully extend its reach. As the crises of overproduction grip capitalist societies, it becomes more and more necessary for the bourgeoisie to resort to military action in order to open new areas of exploitation. In today’s society, war also means flirting with the specter of limitless devastation in the form of nuclear annihilation.

Communists oppose all wars but those that advance the struggle for liberation and the abolition of classes. Always and at all times, communists are for the defeat of the bourgeoisie in times of war. Such a defeat, even when it is a defeat for both sides, is a “lesser evil” when compared to the alternative. As part of this, communists always point out the connection between war abroad and attacks on proletarians at home, and point out that the only way to end both of these horrific phenomena is to transform the movement against war into a movement for liberation and the abolition of classes.

The only instances when we communists can find ourselves allying with such semicolonial states is when they were the product of a legitimate popular democratic movement that had consciously chosen

composition of both the exploiting and exploited classes. Communists see the elimination of these forms of superexploitation and superoppression as a necessary task — and predicated on the abolition of class society, which perpetuates the institutional and societal divisions — and will work alongside those who share this goal.

The ideological prejudices and backwardness inherent in superexploitation and superoppression permeate all aspects of capitalist class society. As hard as it may try, even the best proletarian party cannot fully escape the distorting effects of this ideology. A caucus may be formed by members of a superoppressed or superexploited group within the proletarian political party in order to educate and agitate among all members of the organization about the special conditions that face these social groups. From time to time, it may also be necessary to develop special interest groups to handle special tasks related to the development of communist consciousness among superexploited and superoppressed groups.

19 Proletarians have no “homeland,” “fatherland” or “motherland.” Rather, proletarians, by virtue of their position in capitalist class relations, have a fundamental bond with their brothers and sisters in all countries of the world. All proletarians, regardless of where in the world they are, share a common position in society: they all have nothing but their labor power to sell, and nothing but their labor power on which they can rely. The concrete results of these common conditions are a nearly universal psychological makeup and habits of life that parallel what we all see as elements of a national culture.

Communists regard themselves as *proletarian internationalists*, in this sense, and seek at all times to bring forward the unconscious instinct toward internationalism and develop it as part of a conscious struggle for self-liberation. As such, communists do not regard the existing political borders of nation-states to be the boundaries of our activity or solidarity. On the contrary, communists seek to break down these borders and build closer ties between the proletarians of different countries and continents. Communists struggle for the broadest possible unity of proletarians regardless of nationality or citizenship. We reject

and the national character of the bourgeoisie and capital itself — becoming more and more aggravated. In order for this contradiction to be resolved progressively, it is necessary for the character of capital to match the character of its market. One of the central tasks of a workers’ republic, as it moves ever closer to the abolition of classes, is the systematic integration of society on a world scale. National political structures must give way to the formation of a global body politic and a global political system; national cultures must integrate and evolve into a worldwide culture that takes the best elements of all societies and democratizes them.

14 Communists do not stand apart from the proletariat as a whole, but take our place as part of the most politically advanced and active elements of our class. What distinguishes communists, as individuals and as a current, from the proletariat at large is our understanding of the world around us, and the principles and program that flow directly from this knowledge. Central to the task of bringing communist politics to the proletariat is consistent activity in organizations where there are concentrations of working people.

Communists reject the view that the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a workers’ republic, can be accomplished solely through economic organization and action. Limiting the struggle of the proletariat to the economic arena at the expense of fighting to fulfill the political interests of the proletariat, or merely adding a political veneer to the existing economic struggle, only disarms workers in the face of an armed and organized capitalist state. Breaking down the walls between economics and politics is a key goal of communists, and guides our work by setting forth the task of organizing the proletariat consciously and politically — as a political party seeking to win political power.

15 The programmatic demands of the communists are based on the concrete conditions where they operate, and the objective needs of the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. There is no ready-made blueprint or cookbook that lays out in advance the kind of demands communists raise at a given time.

The long-term demands of communists are centered on the tasks associated with the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and capitalist rule, and the establishment of a workers' republic. Their formulation may change with the conditions of the area in which they are raised, but the general demands remain the same. In general, communists do not seek to develop immediate demands — that is, demands that arise spontaneously from the daily struggles of the proletariat.

We communists support and defend all immediate demands and struggles of the proletariat, even while we may be critical of the partial or limited character of the demands or struggle. The role of communists in struggles based on immediate demands is to formulate demands and slogans that seek to build on the immediate demands of the proletariat, and advance their consciousness to an acceptance of the long-term demands of communists. These communist demands, which serve as a way to bridge the gap between the immediate struggles and the long-term struggle for a workers' republic, are never counterposed to the immediate demands of the proletariat, and are never a substitute for the long-term program of proletarian power.

16 Because the movement for proletarian self-liberation and the abolition of classes is primarily a political movement, communists concentrate on the formulation of political demands that match the material conditions in which they operate. As with all types of concrete communist demands, political slogans and positions are formulated based on the objective needs of proletarians in a given area. The political demands of communists can generally be grouped into two categories: democratic and socialist. It is a central task of communists to be able to strike the balance between these two forms of political demands, so that they can have the maximum effect when raised among the proletariat.

The importance of raising political demands of a democratic nature stems from both the objective needs of the proletariat and the overall understanding communists have regarding the road to the overthrow of the capitalist system. Just as it is a central mistake for proletarians to limit themselves to either immediate or long-term demands in all arenas of struggle, so too it is an error to reject raising democratic or socialist

political demands. A system of democratic and socialist political demands, paralleling the dynamic relationship between immediate and long-term slogans in all areas of the class struggle, is necessary to advance the political struggle of the proletariat for its emancipation.

17 Demands for a broader democratic system can play an important role in the development of a proletarian movement for self-liberation and the abolition of classes. Democracy, like all other terms that represent political concepts, has a definite social and class content. Communists reject the idea that bourgeois democracy is a genuine democratic model for society as a whole. Communists believe that democracy demands not only the elaboration of specific rights extended to all in society, but also that these rights must be enforced and guaranteed by society. Communists seek to replace bourgeois democracy with proletarian democracy — a democratic political system that benefits those who are the most oppressed and exploited in capitalist class society, and thus benefits all people.

This is not to say, however, that communists simply wait for the victory of the proletarian revolution and the establishment of a workers' republic before developing a more democratic system. On the contrary, always and at all times, in word and deed, communists work to push forward the boundaries of bourgeois democracy. The broader, more advanced and generous bourgeois democracy is, the easier it is for the proletariat to win political power and begin the transition from capitalism to communism. Communists work to not only extend the boundaries of political democracy, but also to break down the artificial barrier erected by the bourgeoisie between politics, economics, culture and social relations, and to extend democracy into all these areas.

18 The division of labor into definite classes is the primary antagonism of society. However, there are groups of people that suffer from privations and prejudices that cross these class lines, and create dynamics and antagonisms that communists must address. These added divisions, which center on differences of gender, race, nationality, age, ability and sexuality, are barriers that were established in the birth pangs of class society, and serve to clarify the